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Community Group Awards Grant to Eastern Symphony Orchestra

Sep-10-2008

The Charleston Area Charitable Foundation, a longtime supporter of the Eastern Symphony Orchestra, recently awarded another \$10,000 grant to boost the orchestra's offerings at this important point in its history.



The opening of Eastern Illinois University's Doudna Fine Arts Center, one of the finest facilities of its kind in the Midwest, deserves the best art, music and theatre offerings possible, and this gift will help make that possible, said Richard Robert Rossi, ESO director.

"Receiving the funding from the foundation is particularly important this year," Rossi said. "As we move into the new Doudna Fine Arts Center, there are expectations that need to be met by the ESO in continuing to present to the students and community at large. The funding will help tremendously with meeting our goals in presenting these quality performances."

The orchestra blends the talents of EIU's best student musicians with contracted professional quality players from the community. It has grown over the past few years, due in large part to the foundation's support, Rossi said.

"At this point in the development of our program, the funds are helping to provide the experience necessary for our students to have a well-rounded education," Rossi said. "And as our program continues to grow, especially in our fine arts building, we're hoping that the orchestra will continue to attract high-caliber students to Eastern."

The ESO also provides a unique opportunity for the area's exceptionally talented high school and middle school orchestral students through the Symphonic Honors Initiative Program, which began more than three years ago because there were no string/orchestral programs in Coles County schools.

Rossi praised Terry Coulton of Charleston for her extensive work in initiating SHIP and preparing many of its participants.

"Through this professional orchestral experience, talented students are prepared for future orchestral opportunities," Rossi said.

The sky is the limit for the Eastern Symphony Orchestra, Rossi said.

"It is my plan to continue to move the ESO to higher levels and to awaken the surrounding community's awareness of our mission to foster and promote the arts," he said. "It is my hope to continue to build the orchestra into a reputable and essential element not only in our community and surrounding communities, but in the state of Illinois and eventually on national and even international levels."

Those dreams are very much dependent upon the support received from donors, with the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation leading the way, he said.

"I would like to reiterate my humble thanks to President Michael Metzger and the members of the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation," Rossi said.

For more information on the Eastern Symphony Orchestra, including its 2008-2009 schedule, please see http://www.eiu.edu/music/ensembles_eastern_symphony_orchestra.php.